OXEN YOKES AND COFFINS
DEATH OF JIMMIE AND MOVING OF VILLAGE
FATHER'S REMORSE

About the time Susie beat the Indian to death, there was about 30 acres of fine alfalfa all unfenced on the upper ranch. Father would irrigate this as well as scattering water through the sage-brush on the lower ranch to bring in meadow grass. One day Father was going to the upper ranch to irrigate. He took Owen and I along to play. We at once went into the house. There was nothing below but a work bench, but when we went into the attic we got our eyes opened, for there we found five or six ox yokes all ready for bows and about a dozen coffins made of pine, one completely covered with black velvet with tasseled velvet handles attached. I thought it was the most beautiful box I had ever seen. Owen told me they were for dead people. Eggleston, the carpenter whom Father had bought the two ranches from had made them and left them for storage.

For about the next two years our main pastime was playing with two Indian boys who came near the house and called us to come out and play. One day after a severe thunder storm, Father said we could go and play with Norman Creiger, a boy living about 2 miles away. I recall how those Indian boys entreated us not to go. Calling out: "Kama-hoo-natche (come here boys). He-new-me-ah (Where are you going?) No-eshah (Don't go away). Pie-e-ew-hoo (Trail pretty muddy). Eja-ah-hogadie-mama-loos-natche (Coyote hungry-kill boys). However I don't think we were afraid of the big bad wolf, but we stayed and played with the boys. Father for about two years had spent most of his time cutting and hauling Juniper fence posts , getting cotton-wood poles from Pole Canyon in order to fence the lower ranch. He had hired these Indians a great deal to dig post holes and set fence posts, pay ing them partly in cash and trading them flour, potatoes, meat, and a double barrel muzzle loading shot gun, etc.

Finally he had all the lower ranch fenced with a two pole fence. One day we went to the village to play. Jack was feeling badly and Jimmie was sick. We could hear the Medicine Man chanting seemingly a never ending chant over Jimmie. He evidently had pneumonia. A few days later about sunrise we heard a loud wailing from the camp and we knew Jimmie was dead. It was almost like losing a near relative for us boys. Jimmie had always been our favorite. We were both sad and curious as we watched the proceedings from a short distance.

They had taken two strong lodge poles from Sam's camp. then then wrapped Jimmie's body snugly in a Rabbit skin blanket and secured him across the poles. Then two Indians walking tandem took him away to the foothills for burial. That evening about sunset, Owen was helping Father with the chores. I was a short distance away. Going quite near I saw movement in the brush behind the barn. I saw Mollie sitting on the ground, her face covered with pitch and the pitch was fresh, (A usual custom when there was a death in the family). On seeing me she quickly covered her head and body with a blanket. Jack was lying down beside her. I went to the house and told Mother they were there with nothing to eat. She baked some potatoes and gave me a half of a loaf of bread. She put them in an old milk pan and told me to leave them there. They stayed overnight as Mollie would'nt go back to her teepee. The next morning about sunrise we could see the teepee going up in flames. It was always the custom when the death was in the family. Soon Sam came by leading a pony with all their belongings. All their blankets, two old muskets and perhaps a stone mortar. Also a willow pitched water jug, and probably two dozen of Mollies blankets. They made camp about 3 miles southerly and just east across the river from the Hardy place. After those Indians had helped to enclose

themselves, Father told them they would have to move. They tore down their teepees, took their poles and moved about a mile farther north without a whimper. With them they took three ponies. Sometime later Father suspected that they were turning their ponies back in the field to feed during the night and getting them out in the early morning. Getting on a saddlehorse Father galloped towards the gate. When he got up early at break of day Father saw Old Mark leading three ponies towards the gate. He got on his saddle horse and galloped towards the gate ahead of Mark. When Mark arrived Father told him, "I want you to keep your horses out of here. This is my land." Mark replied, "Where you catchum land?" Father said: "From the government. "Mark replied: "Whose government's mother?" and meekly passed through the gate. Father often told how remorseful he felt when he closed that gate behind Old Mark. Forever forbidden were the Indians the use of the land they had used and camped on for thousands of years. Those three words: Whose government's mother?" Coming from an ignorant aborigine impress Father as he said more then any other words in the whole English Language. Father thought: "Lo! The poor Indian!"